

MOBILE MARITIME COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 16, 2000; 1000-1130

Location: International Trade Center, Killian Room

Chair: Jeff Mynatt (Strachan Shipping)

Vice-Chair: CAPT Dave Carey (Harbormaster)

AGENDA:

New Introductions
One Way Channel Traffic
Port Terminology
Non-Mobile Agents
MSO Mobile Issues
Op Sail 2002

ACOE Issues
ATON Issues
Subcommittee Reports
- Theodore
- Vessel Priorities
- Broadcast Notice to Mariners

New Introductions: Jeff Mynatt started the meeting by asking everyone to introduce themselves, as there were some new faces in the crowd and others that had not been present in a while. Of note, LCDR Casey Plagge introduced himself as the new Chief of Port Operations at Marine Safety Office Mobile.

One Way Channel Traffic: Currently, there is a 115' beam and/or 45' draft one way traffic restriction in the Mobile Ship Channel. Apparently, this restriction was placed before the channel was widened, and never adjusted. Many ship channel users have expressed interest in changing the restriction to accommodate wider vessels for two-way traffic. The Vessel Priorities Subcommittee will research the possibility of changing the restriction.

Rail Ship: Capt Carey reported a rail ship service, licensed as a short rail railroad, is making plans to call regularly on the Port of Mobile beginning January 2001. This service consists of two 575' x 117.6' Mexican flagged vessels that draft 16' and can carry up to 55 rail cars. The vessels will dock at McDuffie Terminal, tying into the terminal's rail line, and intend to operate on an 8 hour turnaround, every 4 days. Brings up issue of vessel priorities again; whether or not certain lines of service should have rights of priority over others.

Port Terminology: Capt Carey brought up the notion of creating a Port Terminology document or Port Glossary to ensure all port users (ship agents, pilots, gov't agencies, stevedores, etc.) are defining vessel and other port related activities the same way. For example, "What does vessel alongside the dock" mean? Does it mean first line on or gangway down? With respect to this example, everybody agreed it meant first line on. Most felt that such a glossary was not needed.

Non-Mobile Agents: Jeff Mynatt started the discussion by inquiring how many out-of-town ship agents do business in Mobile. There has been a growing concern among Mobile ship agents and Terminal Managers with regard to vessels that have non-local agents that are not present when a vessel arrives and has an issue or a problem that the agent must handle. There have been instances when local agents, in good faith, have had to take care of such issues at the last minute for the well being/safety of the port. Considerations concerning fees for non-local agents to conduct business in the Port of Mobile were discussed, similar to what the Port of

Non-Mobile Agents (cont.): Pascagoula does. Creation of licensing process guidelines was also discussed. At least require non-local agents to provide 24 hour communications to the Harbormaster for a vessel to come to port. Require the agent to be in Mobile when the pilot boards the vessel. Capt Carey will draft a letter, for review, to non-local agents that will detail such guidelines.

A secondary discussion spun off depicting the need for a true “port wide” port authority, which would provide information that markets the “whole” port, and not just the Alabama State Docks. Avenues to do so could include a Mobile Maritime Committee website on the USCG Marine Safety Office (MSO) and/or the Alabama State Docks home page. This could include mapping out the entire port, guidelines, etc. Capt Carey will discuss this issue with the State Docks Director, Jimmy Lyons. MSO Mobile has already created a section on their website for the Mobile Maritime Committee that is awaiting any additions the Committee wishes to include.

MSO Mobile Issues: LT Schultz announced there will be intermittent temporary closures of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, in Santa Rosa Sound, between Navarre Bridge and Manatee Point (MM 209 to 214) on September 18, 2000 from 0700 to 1200 during Eglin Airforce Base missile launch exercises. The backup weather day will be September 19, 2000 from 0700 to 1200. Coast Guard vessels will be on scene for concerned traffic.

Also passed, was a hurricane preparedness reminder that MSO Port Emergency Action Team personnel will call on industry for a snapshot of port operations information if any severe weather or storms threaten the area. The MSO also has a port status voice announcement system that will inform callers of any port restrictions, emergency situations, closures, etc. That number is (334) 441-5080.

Op Sail 2002: Atlantic Marine has committed dock space and parking area. One of the many issues the event coordinators are working on is how and where to show off the tall ships for the parade. Whether or not commercial traffic interruptions on the waterways will occur will need to be addressed.

ACOE Issues: Capt Carey spoke on behalf of the Army Corps of Engineers. The previous shoaling problem in Theodore Ship Channel has been cleared. There is now a 45’ depth across the channel. Dredging operations are underway on the Tenn-Tom Waterway. The Mobile Ship Channel deepening and widening study will cost \$6 million, of which Alabama State Docks funds 50%. This includes an environmental salt water intrusion impact study to Coffeerville Dam, Barry Steam Plant, and other areas. A study to dredge Petit Boy Pass Channel for direct access into Bayou La Batre is pending. The ACOE is seeking any comments to privately redredge Chickasaw Channel to a depth of 35’. Able Marine fleeting area permit at mile 2.0 on the Mobile River has been approved. No funding at this time for the Arlington Channel dredging project.

ATON Issues: No Aids to Navigation issues to report.

Subcommittee Reports: No reports.

Other Issues:

Port firefighting memorandums of understanding are in place with the city and the USCG. Safety concerns are evident with the lessons learned from the recent vessel fire incident in New Orleans, where the ship rolled over while extinguishing the fire.

The National Weather Service is considering the installation of a visibility sensor (for fog) at the Dauphin Island weather station. The cost is \$9,000. The Dauphin Island station tide level and water temperature sensors are down. There are new weather sensors being installed at ACOE sites from Gulfport to Panama City. The information is available through the ACOE Water Resources Division website at www.sam.usace.army.mil/. Information east of Pensacola is available by satellite. Wind and temperature sensors are pending on the Biloxi station. Wind sensors at Middle Bay and Petit Boy continue to suffer lightning strikes.

Alabama State Docks first board meeting is an open meeting that is scheduled for August 28, 2000 in the Killian Room.

The Alabama State Docks will undergo a name change to the Port of Alabama.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 11, 2000 from 1030 to 1130** in the Killian Room at the International Trade Center.

This meeting was adjourned at 1140. The meeting minutes are also posted on MSO Mobile's web site at www.uscg.mil/d8/mso/mobile.

Thank you for your participation. Any questions or concerns can be addressed to Jeff Mynatt at (334) 433-5401 or Capt Carey at (334) 441-7250.

For Coast Guard issues please contact Marine Safety Office Mobile at (334) 441-5121.